

It has generally been imagined that the purpose of this singular faculty accorded to the Chamæleon is to enable it to accommodate its appearance to that of surrounding objects, but the observations of Van der Höven seem to negative that idea, and the few experiments I have made with that view have not led to any such results. The box in which it is kept is of deal, with a glass at the top and a piece of flannel laid at the bottom; a small branching stick being introduced by way of a perch. I have introduced at various times pieces of coloured paper, covering the bottom of the box, of blue, yellow and scarlet, but without the slightest effect upon the appearance of the animal. Considering that these primary colours were not such as it would be likely to be placed in contact with in a state of nature, I next tried a piece of green calico, but equally without result. The animal went through all its usual changes, without their being in any way modified by the colours placed underneath it. The general tints approximate, as may readily be observed, to those of the branches of trees, just as those of most animals do to the places in which they dwell; but I have never seen the faculty of changing called into play with any apparent object. It is only when the light is removed that the animal assumes a colour which absorbs but little of it.

Regretting that I have not been able to attain any more definite conclusions, I offer these few remarks, hoping that to some naturalist, who may undertake the investigation of these singular phænomena, they may prove not to have been thrown away.—*Proc. Zool. Soc.* July 22, 1851.

Notes on a new species of Artamus, from India.

By Dr. NICHOLSON.

These birds are only found in very thick jungles among the brushwood, where they are always moving about, and are shot with great difficulty, and even then, if not killed outright, they are so tenacious of life, that they creep into the first hole or crevice they come to. The only note I ever heard was like 'chick, chick.' I think they are residents, but the few I have seen just appear and are lost again in a moment, so that I know little of their habits; the one described here had one leg and both wings broken, and still crept into the hole of a jerboa-rat, from which I dug it out dead.

Male: weight $6\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Length from bill to tip of tail $7\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Alar extent 10 inches.

Head large. Bill strong, narrow and sharp, gently arched on the culmen; a distinct notch near the tip of upper mandible; gape wide. Tongue horny and divided at the point. Nostrils basal, small. Eye rather small. Iris of a silvery colour, tinged with yellow.

Wings rounded; first quill very short; third longest; second, third and fourth quills emarginate on outer web.

Tail short, and nearly even at the end, of twelve feathers, $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches long.

Tarsus strong. Hallux and claw stronger than the other toes, and

as long as the inner toe, and has a large pad at its base; the outer toe is shortest; the claws are much hooked.

Contents of stomach were a few grains of *Holcus spicatus* and the exuviae of insects.

Plumage is soft and loose.

Colours: the whole top of the head is covered with a cap of black. Bill lead-colour at base and black at the point. The chin, the breast, and all underneath white; the body all above of a leaden colour. Quills and tail of a light black, edged with light on both webs; the outer web of the outer tail-feather is white, as well as the tips of the first five on each side. Feet and legs black.

I propose for this species the name of *Artamus cucullatus*.—*Proc. Zool. Soc.* June 10, 1851.

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS FOR AUG. 1853.

Chiswick.—August 1. Uniformly overcast: very fine: rain at night. 2. Very fine. 3. Uniform haze: clear. 4—8. Very fine. 9. Slight haze: very fine: clear. 10. Very fine. 11. Slight fog. 12. Cloudy and fine. 13. Overcast. 14. Cloudy. 15. Cloudy and fine. 16. Uniformly overcast: rain. 17. Very fine. 18. Slight fog: very fine: clear. 19. Foggy: very fine: slight rain. 20. Slight rain: cloudy and fine. 21. Very fine. 22. Fine: cloudy: heavy rain at night. 23. Rain: cloudy: clear. 24. Dense fog: dusky haze: fine. 25. Overcast: slight showers: hoisterous, with rain at night. 26. Very boisterous throughout. In this and the preceding day a large quantity of air from the south must have moved over the kingdom. 27. Cloudy and rather boisterous. 28. Clear and very fine. 29. Overcast: very fine. 30, 31. Very fine.

Mean temperature of the month	59°·69
Mean temperature of Aug. 1852	63·67
Mean temperature of Aug. for the last twenty-seven years .	62·12
Average amount of rain in Aug.	2·35 inches.

Boston.—Aug. 1. Cloudy: rain A.M. and P.M. 2. Fine. 3. Cloudy. 4. Fine. 5—8. Cloudy. 9—11. Fine. 12—15. Cloudy. 16. Cloudy: rain A.M. 17. Cloudy: rain P.M. 18. Fine. 19. Cloudy. 20. Cloudy: rain A.M. 21, 22. Fine. 23. Cloudy: rain A.M. 24. Fine: rain P.M. 25. Cloudy: rain A.M. 26. Rain A.M. and P.M. 27. Cloudy: rain A.M. 28, 29. Cloudy. 30, 31. Fine.

Sandwich Manse, Orkney.—Aug. 1. Drizzle A.M.: rain, fair P.M. 2. Cloudy A.M.: damp P.M. 3. Showers A.M.: fair P.M. 4. Cloudy A.M.: showers P.M. 5. Cloudy A.M.: drizzle P.M. 6. Drizzle A.M. and P.M. 7, 8. Cloudy A.M. and P.M. 9. Bright A.M.: clear P.M. 10. Clear A.M.: clear, fine P.M. 11. Bright A.M.: cloudy P.M. 12. Cloudy A.M.: fine P.M. 13, 14. Cloudy A.M. and P.M. 15. Damp A.M.: cloudy P.M. 16. Cloudy A.M.: clear, fine P.M. 17. Showers A.M.: clear, fine P.M. 18. Clear A.M.: clear, fine P.M. 19. Damp A.M.: thunder and lightning, showers P.M. 20. Bright A.M.: thunder and lightning, showers P.M. 21. Bright A.M.: clear P.M. 22. Bright A.M.: showers P.M. 23. Cloudy A.M.: showers P.M. 24. Bright A.M.: clear, aurora P.M. 25. Clear, fine A.M.: drizzle P.M. 26. Rain A.M.: cloudy P.M. 27. Rain A.M.: damp P.M. 28. Damp A.M.: drizzle P.M. 29. Damp A.M.: cloudy P.M. 30. Cloudy A.M. and P.M. 31. Bright A.M.: drizzle P.M.

Mean temperature of Aug. for twenty-six previous years	55°·08
Mean temperature of this month	55·98
Mean temperature of Aug. 1852	60·64
Average quantity of rain in Aug. for seven previous years ...	2·70 inches.

On the 24th, from 9½ till 10 P.M., a comet was seen with a long bright tail, about 5° above the horizon in the N.W. The nucleus like a star of the first magnitude.